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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 070909Z FEB 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8896

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0954

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FOR UNDER-SECRETARY HABIB AND ASST SECRETARY HARTMAN ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: IRVING BROWN'S MEETING WITH GUTIERREZ MELLADO AND LA MATA

1. AS DURING HIS EARLIER VISIT HERE IN MID-JANUARY, IRVING BROWN (AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE) HAS ASKED THAT IN REPORTING THE RESULTS OF HIS MORE SENSITIVE CONVERSATIONS TO YOU, IT BE DONE IN A FASHION THAT WOULD ENSURE VERY LIMITED CIRCULATION. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS ON HIS FEBRUARY 2 DINNER MEETING WITH FIRST VICE PRESIDENT LTGEN GUTIERREZ MELLADO AND SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA. HE HAD MET SEPARATELY WITH BOTH LAST TIME (REFTEL), AND HAD SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH DE LA MATA JANUARY 25 IN GENEVA FOLLOWING THE LATTER'S APPOINTMENT WITH ILO SECGEN FRANCIS BLANCHARD. BROWN DESCRIBED THIS LATEST CONVERSATION AS "DOWN TO EARTH". HE OBSERVED THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT, CURRENTLY DEEPLY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE SERIES OF TERRORIST ACTS IN SPAIN, DID NOT APPEAR AT ALL FLUSTERED AND PROJECTED AN AIR OF CONFIDENCE. DE LA MATA DID MOST OF THE TALKING WITH REGARD TO THE UGT TRADE UNION, BUT BROWN SENSED THAT THE LABOR IMPORTANT DECISIONS WOULD
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BE MADE BY THE GENERAL - OR SUAREZ HIMSELF. BROWN TOLD US THAT HE NOW MORE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ'S STRONG RESERVATION ABOUT THE UGT AS EXPRESSED TO ME (MADRID 459). ALTHOUGH THE GENERAL AND DE LA MATA DID NOT STATE THE PROBLEM IN BALD TERMS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY WERE REFLECTING THE WORRIES OF THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT WHETHER THE UGT MIGHT BE RADICAL. DE LA MATA, INCIDENTALLY, DID

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NOT EVEN HINT AT THIS PROBLEM DURING HIS GENEVA TALK WITH
BROWN OR WITH ME AT DINNER ON FEBRUARY 1.

2. DE LA MATA SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH HIS TALK
WITH ICFTU SECGEN OTTO KERSTEN DAY BEFORE (MADRID 858),
AND TOLD BROWN JESTINGLY THAT KERSTEN HAD MADE ALMOST AS
PERSUASIVE A PITCH AS HE HAD ON THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO ASSIST
THE UGT. THE SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER THEN CAME TO THE
HEART OF THE ISSUE. THERE WAS NO QUESTION, HE SAID,
THAT THE GOVT REALLY WANTED TO MOVE ON THIS MATTER. HOWEVER,
IF THEY WERE TO DO SOMETHING I.E. SOMEHOW ARRANGE TO EXTEND
CREDIT AGAINST THE CONSIDERABLE SUM DUE THE UGT FROM THE
SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION, SSO, PATRIMONY), THEY NEEDED SOME
"GUARANTEE" FOR THEIR INVESTMENT, SO TO SPEAK. THE UGT
MUST SHOW THAT IT IS BEHIND THE NEW SPAIN - IT CANNOT BE
SOMETHING APART FROM THE SPANISH PROCESS. ONE INDICATION
OF GOOD FAITH, SAID DE LA MATA, WOULD BE FOR THE UGT TO
BREAK WITH THE COS (COORDINADORA DE ORGANIZACIONES SINDICALES--
THE NATIONAL "UNITY OF ACTION" MECHANISM GROUPINT THE
SOCIALST UGT, THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO, AND THE COMMUNIST-
DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS, SWC). THE GENERAL THEN WORDED
IT AS FOLLOWS: WE ARE MAKING A NEW SPAIN, A DEMOCRATIC
SPAIN, AND THE UGT MUST MAKE IT KNOWN, IS IT A TRUE TRADE
UNION, SUCH AS THE AFL-CIO, OR NOT? IS IT ITS OWN MASTER,
OR NOT? UGT MILITANTS, GUTIERREZ MELLADO WENT ON, MUST
BE PATRIOTS AS WELL AS TRADE UNIONISTS, "JUST AS YOU ARE IN
THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE U.S." BOTH MEN, SAID BROWN,
EXPRESSED THEIR ADMIRATION FOR THE AMERICAN TYPE OF LABOR
ORGANIZATION, AS A PATRIOTIC PART OF AMERICAN LIFE.
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3. IN RESPONDING TO THIS, BROWN SAID THAT HE AGREED IN
PRINCIPLE TO THE THRUST OF THEIR ARGUMENTS, BUT POINTED OUT
THE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS INVOLVED. JUST AS THE GOVT WAS
EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN DISENGAGING ITSELF FROM THE
PAST, SO WAS THE UGT AFTER 40 YEARS OF REPRESSION AND
CLANDESTINITY. HE AGREED THAT BOTH SIDES MUST IN EFFECT
"PLAY THE GAME" AND BOTH MUST COMPROMISE SOMEWHAT. WITH
RESPECT TO THE DESIRABILITY OF THE UGT BREAKING WITH THE
COS, BROWN AGREED. HE REPEATED REDONDO'S (UGT SECGEN)
ASSURANCES TO HIM THAT THE UGT WAS IN FACT GRADUALLY
WITHDRAWING (REFTEL). DE LA MATA RESPONDED THAT THAT WAS
ALL VERY WELL, BUT THEY WOULD PREFER MORE POSITIVE ACTION.
IN THE MEANTIME, HE CONTINUED, THE GOVT DID NOT APPRECIATE
THE UGT'S OFTEN REVOLUTIONARY SLOGANS WHICH WERE DIFFICULT
TO DIFFERENTIATE FROM THOSE OF THE COMMUNIST UNIONS.

4. BROWN SAID THAT BOTH MEN NOTED THAT THE GREAT MASS OF
SPANISH WORKERS WERE CURRENTLY NON-UNION ORIENTED. HE

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HAD RESPONDED WITH A MILITARY ALLUSION: JUST AS A POWERFUL ARMY CAN BE FORMED FROM A HARDCORE OF PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, SO CAN RELATIVELY FEW TRADE UNION MILITANTS CONVERT THEMSELVES INTO AN EFFECTIVE LABOR MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, IN BOTH CASES LOGISTICS ARE A MANDATORY ELEMENT. THE UGT'S INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS COULD HELP A LITTLE, BUT NOT ENOUGH. THE NEED WAS IMMEDIATE IF THE UGT WAS TO BE ABLE TO STAND UP TO THE SWC. DE LA MATA INFORMED BROWN THAT HE WAS MEETING WITH REDONDO ON FEBRUARY 4.

5. SECURITY ISSUES, SAID BROWN, HAD BEEN TIED IN WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOCIAL AND LABOR PROBLEMS OF SPAIN. BOTH MEN APPRECIATED BROWN'S DISCRETION (NO PRESS STATEMENTS, ETC.) GUTIERREZ MELLADO NOTING THAT LABOR WAS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ISSUE AND THAT CURRENT TERRORIST EVENTS SHOWED THAT THERE WERE PERHAPS EXTERNAL FORCES ACTING AGAINST THE SPANISH DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS.
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6. BROWN SPENT SEVERAL HOURS WITH ME AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 4 TO BRIEF ME ON ABOVE AND I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD BE PREPARED TO ARRANGE FOR HIM TO SEE THE KING IF IT SEEMED USEFUL TO MOVE MATTERS ALONG.

7. SUBSEQUENTLY, BROWN CALLED ME TO SAY THAT THE FEBRUARY 4 TALK BETWEEN REDONDO AND DE LA MAT (REPORTED SEPARATELY) WAS QUITE DISAPPOINTING FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE UGT. DE LA MATA ENGAGED IN SOMETHING OF A DELAYING ACTION AND AVOIDED GETTING DOWN TO BRASS TACKS ON THE UGT'S IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL PROBLEM.

8. IN LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, ISPOKE WITH THE KING AND ARRANGED AN APPOINTMENT FOR BROWN ON FEBRUARY 8. STABLER

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Sent Date: 07-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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